

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 09252 111119Z

41

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 AID-20 CIEP-02 DRC-01 /152 W

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R 111020Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6851

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 9252

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CB

SUBJECT: GKR POLITICAL BASE: EXTENT OF REPUBLICAN PARTY PARTICI-
PATION

1. RECENT PRESS DISPATCHES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE GKR IS
POLITICALLY MORE NARROWLY BASED THAN
IS ACTUALLY THE CASE.

AFP (FBIS D101659) FOR EXAMPLE, IN DISUCSSI REPUBLICAN
PARTY SUPPORT FOR THE GKR'S JULY 9 PEACE INITIATIVE, NOTES
THAT SIRIK MATAK'S REPUBLICAN PARTY "HAS REFUSED TO TAKE
PART IN THE CABINET....," THEREBY LEAVING THE IMPRESSION
THAT THE REPUBLICANS ARE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE GOVERN-
MENT AT ALL.

2. THE HIGH POINT OF REPUBLICAN PRESENCE SAW FOUR
MINISTERS NAMED TO LONG BORET'S DECEMBER 1973,
CABINET. SIRIK MATAK, OF COURSE, HAD JOINED THE HIGH
POLITICAL COUNCIL (HPC) AT ITS APRIL 1973, FORMATIT
AND CONTINUED AS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
WHICH REPLACED THE HPC IN MARCH 1974. REPUBLICAN
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PAGE 02 PHNOM 09252 111119Z

PARTY PARTICIPATION IN THE CABINET, HOWEVER, WAS A

CASUALTY OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INSISTENCE THAT ALL MINISTERS, REGARDLESS OF PARTY AFFILIATION, MUST SUBMIT TO PARLIAMENTARY INTERPELLATION. THIS POINT WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE REPUBLICANS, WHO DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE AUTHORITY OF THZO ONE-PARTY PARLIAMENT. THE REPUBLICANS CLAIMED THE 1972 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WOULD BE RIGGED AND DECEIVED TO CONTEST THEM.) ACCORDINGLY, NO REPUBLICANS JOINED LONG BORET'S JUNE 16 SECOND CABINET.

3. REPUBLICANS, NEVERTHELESS, CONTINUE TO HAVE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE GKR, ALTHOUGH THE NATURE OF THEIR PARTICIPATION HAS CHANGED. NOT ONLY DOES SIRIK MATAKR CONTINUE AS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, BUT

THREE FORMER REPUBLICAN MINISTERS, OP KIM ANG, TRINH HOANH AND CHHIENG KIM SUOR HAVE BEEN NAMED ASSISTANTS TO PRESIDENT LON NOL. OP KIM ANG, MOREOVER, ATTENDS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS, ALTHOUGH HE IS NOT OFFICIALLY A MEMBER.

4. COMMENT::
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS NOT LARGE AND SIRIK MATAK HAS LITTLE POPULAR FOLLOWING. THE PARTY DOES ATTRACT, HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF AMBITIOUS AND INTELLIGENT PERSONS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY. THE PARTY'S ALLIANCE WITH THE RULING SOCIO-REPUBLICANS IS OF PROVEN VALUE AND ONLY FROM

AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS VIEWPOINT, BUT ALSO AS A CHECK ON TENDENCIES TOWARD ONE-PARTY RULE, AND AS A HEALTHY FORCE FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL PARTIES, PEACE PLANS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: martinml
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PHNOM09252
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740185-0261
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740757/aaaabxda.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinml
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by martinml>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GKR POLITICAL BASE: EXTENT OF REPUBLICAN PARTY PARTICI- PATION
TAGS: PINT, CB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005